

The Qiang Cultural Ecological Protection Area from the Perspective of Anthropological Area Studies

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ABSTRACT

China has always been committed to the protection and inheritance of cultural heritage and cultural workers have done a lot of practical work in this area, resulting in many achievements. The cultural ecological protection areas constructed in various areas are one of the effective practical achievements, among which the Qiang cultural ecological protection area located in Sichuan Province has been well developed since its establishment. UNESCO regards "community" as the carrier of intangible cultural heritage, which is different from the definition of cultural ecological protection area in China. China regards "area" as the construction direction and goal of cultural ecological protection areas. Starting from the perspective of area anthropology is beneficial to comb the current development status of the overall ecology of the Qiang nationality, and more effectively continue the historical structure and cultural lifeline of the pluralistic integration of Chinese culture.

Keywords: *Anthropology, Area studies, Qiang nationality, Cultural ecological protection area.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the overall path of protecting the intangible cultural heritage of ethnic minorities, China has proposed and implemented the unique and significant initiative of "national cultural ecological conservation area". The practical action of constructing the protection area provides a feasible model that is worth imitating for the protection of the intangible cultural heritage of other countries: adopting the principle of giving priority to protection and subordinating development to protection, constructing ethnic cultural ecological protection areas, taking measures to classify all resources within the protection area and implement overall protection, and adopting a multi-participation management model, with the management part composed of local governments, experts, social people, and groups¹. In the process of exploring how to protect and inherit intangible cultural heritage, China has adopted the construction of national cultural ecological

protection areas and experimental areas for national cultural ecological protection, so that various ethnic cultural resources (including intangible cultural heritage) can be fully preserved in their original state in the social environment of various areas, known as the "living culture". The Intangible Cultural Heritage Law of China also clearly states that overall protection is the guiding ideology, making significant progress in the construction of national cultural ecological protection areas in various areas.

As of February 2023, China has established a total of 5 national cultural ecological protection areas and 23 national cultural ecological protection (experimental) zones, involving 17 provinces and 410 national intangible cultural heritage representative projects, with significant results. The Qiang cultural ecological protection area is located in Sichuan Province, including Wenchuan, Li County, Mao County, and other counties in the Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, which is the core area of the Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi ethnic cultural corridor, and also one of the core areas known as the "ethnic corridor" by the famous sociologist and anthropologist Mr. Fei Xiaotong. Since its application in October 2008, the Qiang cultural ecological protection area has undergone a

1. Wang Weijie, Xiao Yuanping. National Cultural Ecological protection areas: A "Chinese Model" for the Overall Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ethnic Minorities [J]. Journal of Shenzhen University (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition), 2020,37 (05)

process of transformation from rescue protection after the Wenchuan earthquake to the national cultural industry. In 2019, it was officially transformed from a Qiang cultural ecological protection and experiment area into a Qiang cultural ecological protection area.

This paper mainly discusses the construction of the Qiang musical cultural ecological protection area from the perspective of anthropological areas. Since the concept of cultural ecological protection area was proposed and put into practice, scholars from various academic circles have expressed the feasibility and necessity of building cultural ecological protection areas in their studies. Unlike foreign countries, which use "community" as the carrier of intangible cultural heritage, China has divided the construction direction and objectives of cultural ecological protection area based on "area". Starting from the perspective of area anthropology is beneficial to comb the current development status of the overall ecology of the Qiang nationality, and more effectively continue the historical structure and cultural lifeline of the pluralistic integration of Chinese culture.

2. THE QIANG CULTURAL ECOLOGICAL PROTECTION AREA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL AREA STUDIES

This part explores the inheritance and protection of the Qiang cultural ecological reserve from the perspective of anthropological regional studies. Firstly, it is necessary define the concepts of anthropological and regional studies.

2.1 Anthropological Area Studies

"Area studies" is an inclusive term related to interdisciplinary research and academic fields related to a specific geographical, national/federal, or cultural area². In the process of its development, cultural area research does not specifically refer to the study of a certain field in a certain area, but rather combines multiple disciplines to conduct comprehensive research, such as anthropology, political science, linguistics, and other related fields. Its research methods have been constantly broken

2. D. L. Szanton. Introduction. The Origin, Nature, and Challenges of Area Studies in the United States[C]/The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines. edited by David L. Szanton, published in association with University of California Press, 2002: Introduction.

and reconstructed in the development process, in order to adapt to the dynamic changes of social development.

To understand area studies, it is necessary to define the concept of "area". Boas proposed his own view from the perspective of cultural diversity: areas are both historical and geographical units. They achieve the spatial coefficient of the cultural growth process through time, creating a special focus of history and culture. The physical environment of an area, the "psychology" of people living in the area, and the spread of technology and other ideas are three independent variables that control the growth or development of culture within a cultural area over time³. After that, scholars such as Willes and Krupp successively put forward their own opinions on this basis, and area studies gradually matured.

From its initial state, area studies have entered the perspective of anthropological research. By sorting out its development, it can be seen that scholars have found through empirical research that people living in similar locations often have many same cultural characteristics, including but not limited to clothing, food, housing, and transportation, and even ideological and other aspects may have more or less similarities, which encourages scholars to delimit an area scope based on these cultural commonalities. Anthropological research can provide materials for empirical investigations of area studies.

Since 2002, Professor Gao Bingzhong of Peking University has viewed ethnographic studies of foreign societies as a manifestation of the "cultural writing" ability of Chinese anthropology to express the world⁴. Scholars Zhou Daming and Zhan Xuzhi have explained the historical development of anthropological area studies and their significance for anthropology in China and the world⁵. In addition, a series of discussions and studies are emerging, indicating that anthropology can not only be one of the important disciplines in the field of area studies, but also have important significance for area studies.

3. F. Boas. The limitations of the comparative method of Anthropology[J]. Science, 1896(103) : 901—908.

4. Gao Bingzhong. Will and Academic Action to Perceive the Outside World — The Significance of Overseas Ethnography on China's Social Sciences [J]. Journal of Guangxi University for Nationalities (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), 2009, 31 (5): 2-6 (in Chinese)

5. Zhou Daming, Zhan Xuzhi. The History of the Regional Study in Anthropology and Its Reflection [J]. Ethno-National Studies, 2015(1) : 36-46+124.

2.2 *The Ecological Status of Qiang Music Culture*

The Qiang nationality originates from the ancient Qiang people, and is a mysterious and ancient civilization with its own language. The hardworking Qiang people have created a bright and profound Qiang culture with profound historical heritage. Since its development, Qiang culture has been mainly distributed in Wenchuan, Li County, and other places in the Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province, China, and some are scattered in Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province, Pingwu of Mianyang, and Guizhou.

The Qiang cultural ecological protection area in Sichuan Province involves 7 counties and 1 town. The Qiang people living here have created a splendid and profound Qiang culture. After the 2008 earthquake, the state immediately adopted a "rescue protection" measure for the Qiang culture, allowing it to be preserved and inherited as much as possible. Therefore, the focus of research on the intangible cultural heritage of the Qiang people in the current academic community varies at different stages, and can be divided into two stages in general.

The first phase of the timeline is divided into the period before 2008. The academic research on the intangible cultural heritage of the Qiang ethnic group focused on representative intangible cultural heritage projects. Scholars conducted a detailed study of its connotation, characteristics, and other aspects from the perspective of their own research direction. For example, in terms of religious beliefs, scholars such as Zhou Yuhua and Yu Yi conducted a profound and detailed collation of the "Shibi" culture of the Qiang nationality, and in music and dance, Xiuhua Research believed that song and dance culture occupies an extremely large proportion in Qiang culture, and its status is also highly respected. The style characteristics displayed by Qiang dance are closely related to the living environment, geographical location, religion, and so on.

The second phase of the timeline is divided into the period after 2008. In 2008, a major earthquake occurred in Wenchuan, Sichuan, and the local and surrounding people of all ethnic groups in Wenchuan were greatly impacted and injured. Therefore, this stage of research focused on post-disaster reconstruction. According to statistics, a total of 376 intangible cultural heritage items of the

Qiang nationality were severely damaged during the earthquake disaster, including 20 national, 88 provincial, 118 municipal, and 150 county-level intangible cultural heritage items. A total of 12 Qiang inheritors were killed and 105 were injured, including some elderly Shibi and folk artists who were familiar with the Qiang language, Qiang ethnic culture, and Qiang folk skills. The earthquake has brought a great impact on the culture of the Qiang people. The rescue of personnel and materials after the earthquake, as well as the living environment and psychological state of the residents, require a lot of time to repair. Under this influence, scholars have set out from their own research directions to explore how to minimize the impact of post-disaster reconstruction on the Qiang culture. In the study of post-earthquake reconstruction, scholar La Mingqing proposed the use of traditional protection models to achieve a coordinated and unified "developmental protection model" of cultural protection and development.

The earthquake has caused catastrophic damage to Qiang music cultural assets. Qiang artists such as Xie Xingpeng, a research expert on Qiang culture and Qiang flute music, and Ji Xuewen, an inheritor of Qiang folk songs in Beichuan County, were all killed in the earthquake. Important physical objects, texts, pictures, and audio-visual materials of Qiang folk songs, jew's harps, shalang dance music, Qiang flute performance, and production techniques have been extensively damaged. The casualties of Qiang music inheritors, the destruction of music literature, and the destruction of the environment on which music relies for its survival and development⁶ have made it increasingly difficult to inherit Qiang music culture.

The establishment and development of ethnic cultural ecological protection area based on the catastrophic destruction of the living environment of the Qiang people caused by the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake is a highly targeted and effective measure for China's intangible cultural heritage, and is also an important measure to maintain the diverse pattern of ethnic culture in China.

6. Wang Zhe. A Study on the Protection and Inheritance of the Qiang Ethnic Culture after the Wenchuan Earthquake — Take Qiang's Music as an Example [J]. Journal of Sichuan University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), 2018 (01): 187-192.

2.3 The Construction and Development of the Qiang Cultural Ecological Protection Area from the Perspective of Anthropological Area Studies

The establishment of the Qiang cultural ecological protection and experiment area is an effective measure to achieve the overall protection of various cultural resources of the Qiang people. From various perspectives of continuing the true state of the Qiang culture, ensuring the quality of life of all the Qiang people, and rebuilding their homes after the earthquake, China has adopted the application for the establishment of the Qiang cultural ecological protection and experiment area, so that the traditional culture of the Qiang people can be systematically inherited⁷. Analogizing the overall cultural resources of the Qiang people into a circle and radiating outward from the intangible cultural heritage can promote the overall protection and development of the Qiang culture, and effectively inherit the intangible cultural heritage, taking both into account and maintaining ecological balance. The Chinese nation is a whole, and various ethnic minorities are an indispensable part of it. The successful construction of a cultural ecological protection area for one ethnic minority will promote and encourage the protection of the cultural resources of the remaining ethnic minorities, which is conducive to effectively enhancing cultural self-confidence, building a shared spiritual home for the Chinese nation, enhancing national cohesion, and promoting the comprehensive coordination and sustainable development of resources in Chinese society⁸.

The Qiang cultural ecological protection and experiment area not only includes important living areas for the local Qiang people, but also covers the splendid historical intangible cultural heritage of the Qiang people. Up to now, the intangible cultural heritage projects in the Qiang cultural ecological protection area have achieved significant results and are being continuously and deeply promoted. The Qiang cultural ecological protection area should be considered as an area and studied from an

7. Lin Jifu. On Home Reconstruction and Construction of Qiang People's Cultural and Ecological Protection Experimental Areas [J]. Journal of South Central Minzu University (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition), 2018,38 (04): 33-37.

8. Lin Jifu. On Home Reconstruction and Construction of Qiang People's Cultural and Ecological Protection Experimental Areas [J]. Journal of South Central Minzu University (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition), 2018,38 (04): 33-37.

anthropological perspective, emphasizing the overall development of cultural ecology in its construction process.

3. CONCLUSION

China is currently in a pluralistic and symbiotic social pattern, and people have different specific feelings about world culture. However, once the interrelatedness of regional culture as a whole ecological aspect is fully understood, the "area-culture-ecology" can be integrated⁹. Building a national Qiang cultural ecological protection area is a major innovative achievement explored by China on the path of intangible cultural heritage protection and inheritance. The establishment of Qiang cultural ecological protection area is an important measure to protect the living environment of Qiang culture and an important carrier for the inheritance and continuation of Qiang culture. As a multi-ethnic country with diverse cultural backgrounds, effectively protecting the living environment and ecological culture of ethnic minorities to provide practical experience for the inheritance of the ecological culture of other ethnic minorities in China is more conducive to the inheritance and development of China's diverse cultural pattern, making China's national culture stand brilliantly on the world stage.

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